



# The Responder

## Prince William County, Virginia CERT Newsletter

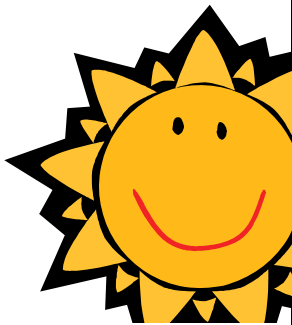


JUNE 2007  
Volume 2 Number 1

*HAVE  
A SAFE  
SUMMER*

We wish you a  
very happy  
summer.  
Remember—  
summer is  
hurricane and  
tornado season.  
Be prepared  
and help others  
become  
prepared.

*Prince William  
County CERT*



### News About Training Exercise:

#### **CERT TRAINING EXERCISE, RIVER RIDGE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION**

On May 12, 2007, six (6) CERTs from the River Ridge Community Association (RRCA) participated in a community training exercise. River Ridge (RR) is an adult community with 238 homes and a very active homeowners' association. This was the second such exercise within Prince William County with the first conducted in November 2005 in Heritage Hunt.

In January 2007, local CERTs requested and obtained approval from the Board of Directors to conduct a training exercise on common property including the communities' private streets. DFR was informed and their guidance was to keep off private property and to not carry any victims.

The exercise scenario was ... a tornado raced through the County and in its path was River Ridge. The tornado destroyed ten (10) homes in RR before heading East across the Potomac River. Our first-due station, Occoquan/Woodbridge/Lake Ridge (OWL) - Station 2, was fully committed within the County and delayed. Local CERTs were the sole responders to the disaster.



Exercise announcement to residents one week prior to the event.

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OWL (Station 2) stages equipment in clubhouse parking lot near the disaster scene.

See a picture of Team 2 participants on the last page of this Responder.

## Contact Information:

Cpt. Tim Taylor

Department of Fire and Rescue

[staylor@pwcgov.org](mailto:staylor@pwcgov.org)

### Prince William County CERT Executive Committee Members:

Acting Chair

Hugh Stevenson

[hstevenson12198@msn.com](mailto:hstevenson12198@msn.com)

Vice Chair for Operations and  
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The conduct of the exercise followed the same sequence as our course final exam. The only exception was using two-way radios to start the play. Our NOAA radios would alert us to a potential hazardous event. This in turn would prompt CERTs to activate their two-way radios (channel 11) which occurred at 0845 hr as a standby call.

RR CERTs were called to assemble at 0900 at a location determined by the exercise director. After a safety brief and assessment of the scene, search and rescue operations commenced followed by TRIAGE of victims using START as a guide. A treatment area was established by the director. Victims, where possible, were quickly moved to this safe area where more detailed follow-up medical assistance was rendered. The exercise terminated at 1030 hrs with a critique of the exercise. See the pictures that follow on the morning's events.



Boy Scouts from Troop served as victims. The "blood" does wash off.



A resident, victim coded Red.

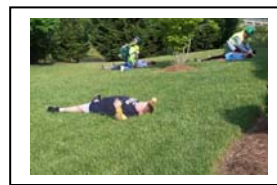
The exercise was a huge success. Foremost, there were no "real" injuries. During the course of the exercise, Station 2 was on-site providing critique and guidance. The cooperation between CERTs and Station 2 was "priceless". Nine residents from the 10 homes volunteered as victims. One victim was heard saying, "Let's do it again next year. If we practice, there will be no tornadoes". Seven (7) Boy Scouts from Woodbridge Troop 1365 also served as victims working on their merit badges...a bonus for both the community and the scouts. Local CERTs gained the confidence to work in a hostile, stressful environment and make a difference in protecting the lives of community residents.

The exercise highlighted the need for proper radio discipline with more treatment and evacuation refresher training. Also noted was the lack of medical supplies in the community as well as CERTs' first aid kit to adequately treat many mass casualties.

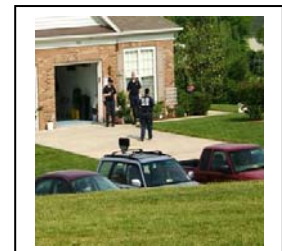
Hugh Stevenson



A smiling resident, victim



Search and Rescue



OWL conducts secondary search operations



Treatment area located away from hazards-up wind



OWL (Capt. Jack McGovern) arrives on scene and the exercise director (Hugh Stevenson) transfers Incident Command functions.

## Newsletter Submissions:

If you have team information or kudos that you would like to submit for the next Responder Newsletter in August, please email them to Marsha Davis at [cert\\_education@yahoo.com](mailto:cert_education@yahoo.com)

as an attachment in

### WORD FORMAT.

I would like to encourage all Team Coordinators to submit information about their teams.

Looking forward to hearing from you!



## All-Hands Meeting Report

Dick Powell

On April 21, about 60 PWC CERT members gathered at Buckhall's Station 16 for the second annual All-Hands meeting.

Two CERT coordinators from adjacent counties shared how their CERTs are organized and operate, giving new ideas on how we can be structured and focused.



Cynthia Kellams, CERT Coordinator for Arlington County recounted how CERT in her county was born in the weeks following 9/11, and has grown to 360 members of which 160 are "NIMS compliant" – meaning they have taken the two basic NIMS courses – and constitute the core of the CERT group. Arlington's CERTs are neighborhood-based in 40 of 60 civic associations all organized into 10 team clusters. They hold monthly or quarterly team meetings each headed by a team coordinator and an assistant.

CERT is accountable to the Office of Emergency Management, not fire and rescue, but uses fire and rescue trainers to teach CERT courses. Some CERTs help in the EOC

Arlington CERT deployed following Hurricane Isabell CERTs delivered ice, marked downed power lines and gained huge favor with the county.

On-going training is done by the teams who meet only when they need to. This includes traffic direction, triage, new version of CPR. CERTs do not do parades, smoke alarm installation. Teams' main emphasis is "training citizens to respond in major disasters."

Bob Mizer, Volunteer Coordinator, Fire and Rescue Department, Fairfax County, described that CERT had grown to 370 members from 28 classes over 4 years including corporate and campus CERTs. Fairfax CERT is county-based, a citizen arm of fire and rescue following a motto is "Respond as Neighbors", and has no expectation to deploy outside of neighborhood or community. CERT is supported by high level in county government. All instructors are paid staff. The basic course is modified a lot to local needs and two courses are taught concurrently. Major emphasis is placed on leadership and CERTs "taking charge".



(continued on page 4)

## All-Hands Meeting Report (continued from page 3)



Hugh Stevenson reports to all CERTS at the meeting



Watch for the announcement of the next All-Hands Meeting.

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**Don't miss it.**

Dick Powell, Team Leader, CERT 4, described team mission-focused activities around four goals - emergency preparedness information, immediate response in neighborhoods, support for Station 4, and demonstrating value of CERT. CERT 4 plans to participate in public events such as the August county fair, National Night Out, and local summer parades. Other details of CERT 4 appear in another article in this edition of Responder.

Chair, Hugh Stevenson, reported that there are no funds for conducting CERT basic training for 2007. This is due in part to a drastic reduction in federal government funding of emergency management activities in the National Capital Region. He encouraged all teams to continue to develop relations with local fire and rescue stations, and to maintain readiness for emergencies. He is trying to set up refresher training for emergency medical skills for some time in September, and will notify the membership when dates are confirmed.

He listened to ideas and comments raised by members focused on how we can be self-sustaining and how to get better support from the county. The discussion raised the following questions and comments:

- How can we partner with other counties?
- Train CPR in-house with external help.
- We need to develop a CERT plan and be proactive by proposing it to DFR.

Finally, Hugh recognized with appreciation the service to the Executive Committee of Jenn Pavol and Rebecca Makely who have completed their two-year terms as Vice Chair for Information and Education and Vice Chair for Logistics and Finance respectively. He announced the appointment of Marsha Davis to follow Jenn, and urged members to apply for the position held by Rebecca. Anyone interested in serving on the EC should contact Hugh at any time.





## Team 4 Reaches Out

by Dick Powell, Team Leader,

CERT 4 monthly meetings are open to PWC CERT members in the Western Region who belong to adjacent smaller teams to stay active in CERT. Anyone assigned to Teams 11, 15 and 25 who want to attend CERT 4 meetings contact me. Each meeting will contain a refresher training element and discussing plans and activities. At our last meeting we discussed our new Communications SOP and conducted a successful 2-way radio check across the 800-acre Heritage Hunt community. Our neighborhood disaster drill in November has helped us focus on subjects that we need to review. We plan another neighborhood drill in fall 2007.

In addition to staying ready for disasters, CERT 4 is increasingly accepting specific tasks unique to its area, greater Gainesville. Volunteer Station Chiefs Richard and Wanda Bird have asked CERT 4 to be ready to help if a large 200-unit senior rental facility, known as The Marque at Heritage Hunt, were to be fully involved in a fire. We developed a written response plan including notification, assembly, deployment and preparation for assisting residents to assemble and be transported by Red Cross resources to shelters. We walked around and through the facility and conducted a table-top exercise to increase our readiness for that task.

In April, we hosted a Red Cross training session of Shelter Operations. The Battlefield High School in nearby Haymarket has been designated one of the three primary shelters in event of a disaster. Karen Wayne, CEO of the Prince William Chapter of the Red Cross, had urged CERT members to undergo this training to assist in this type of recovery operation. Seventeen CERT members attended the training. We hope to conduct another course in fall of 2007. Stay posted as the announcement will be for all PWC CERT members.

Ride-alongs with Station 4 continue to familiarize our members with fire and rescue operations and culture. To date eight CERT 4 members have taken advantage of this valuable learning experience. We found that a big box of cookies is a nice way to say thanks to the volunteers of Station 4 for helping us learn.

In September, Harry Beaver and I will conduct the annual Emergency Preparedness Update to the residents of Heritage Hunt. Our speakers will be Pat Collins of the PWC Emergency Operations Center and Karen Wayne of the Red Cross. We plan to have static displays by Red Cross, Station 4, PWC Emergency Management, CERT 4 and Harry's family grab-and-go kit.

Finally, Reggie Newell contacted 200 CERT organizations in Florida, Alabama, Georgia and Oklahoma to inquire as to their use of CERTs during recent disasters. He received 25 responses indicating that most CERT organizations were well connected and supported by emergency services and had been quite useful especially in recovery operations following the hurricanes and tornadoes that hit those states.

I want to recognize Jenn Pavol for having attending all 27 CERT 4 monthly meetings since mid 2004, except one, a record that earns this loyal school teacher a Gold Star in my book.

Stay safe and stay ready,

Dick

We now know what CERT 4 is doing. What is your CERT Team doing? Write up an article for the next Responder and send it to [cert\\_education@yahoo.com](mailto:cert_education@yahoo.com)



## What Should I Have in My Home Emergency Preparedness Kit?

Put together a three-day supply of the following items in an easy-to-carry container:

- Non-perishable food that does not require preparation like canned meat, vegetables and fruit
- Manual can opener
- At least three gallons of bottled water per family member
- Battery-operated radio
- Flashlights
- Extra batteries
- First aid kit
- Prescription medications
- Duct tape and plastic sheeting
- Pet supplies

**Ready Kit Plus™** provides one person with complete 72-hour emergency preparedness.

<http://www.silverstarsurplus.com/hgrk.html>



## Helpful Web Sites

- Prince William County (Local)  
[www.pwcgov.org](http://www.pwcgov.org)
- VDEM (State)  
[www.vaemergency.com](http://www.vaemergency.com)
- FEMA (Federal)  
[www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov)
- Ready (DHS)  
[www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov)
- Be Ready, Make a Plan  
[www.makeaplan.org](http://www.makeaplan.org)
- Propac (CERT Equipment)  
[www.cert-kits.com](http://www.cert-kits.com)
- Los Angeles CERT (CERT Store)  
[www.cert-la.com](http://www.cert-la.com)

## Need Gear, Brochures, Web Sites?

Contact Rebecca Makely  
Vice Chair, Logistics & Finance  
[cert\\_logistics@yahoo.com](mailto:cert_logistics@yahoo.com)



## Suggested FRS/GMRS Radio SOP Courtesy of CERT 4

Channel frequencies:    **Primary –                    11.8**  
                                  **Alternates:            Alt 1 – 12.8**  
                                                         **Alt 2 – 13.8**  
                                                         **Alt 3 – 14.8**



### Radio Procedure Discipline

- Do not use old "10 Codes".
- Keep transmissions brief. Keep channel open for others to use.
- Press the press-to-talk button for a half second before transmitting.
- Release the press-to-talk button when transmission is complete.
- Keep team leader and other CERTs informed of your location, activities, needs and matters related to the task.
- Carry the radio in a high pocket or clipped near your ear where you can easily hear it, or use a headset or ear bud.
- Call team leader if you are leaving the net.
- Carry spare batteries.
- All team operations should be only on FRS channels (8-14). Do not use GMRS channels (1-7, 15-22) unless instructed.

### Messages elements:

- Who you are calling, by name or team role designation
- Who you are, by name or team role designation
- Message - short and to the point
- To ask for or expect a reply, say "Over"
- To end a message or expect no reply, say "Out", "That's all"
- To acknowledge receiving something, say "Okay", "Understand", "Will do"

### Opening the net to CERT Team – responses in numerical order

"Team 4, this is Dick, opening CERT 4 net, over."

"This is 1 Kathy, I hear you loud and clear, over."

"This is 2 Harry, I hear you weak and broken, over."

### To make check communicability

"Jenn, this is George, how do you hear me, over."

"This is Jenn, I hear you loud and clear. How do you hear me?"

"I hear you faint and broken."

### To establish contact and send a message and get a response

"Phyllis, this is Brian, over."

"Brian, this is Phyllis, over."

"What is your location?"

"I am at the corner of A Street and 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue."

"Thanks, that's all."

**Or**

"Brian, this is Jenn, I need two CERTs to help me at the front door of the school, over."

"Will send you two. How soon do you need them?"

"Immediately."

"Will do, out."

**Or**

"Julian, this Dick. Move your team to corner of Fieldstone and Heritage Hunt Drive and link up with EMS team from Station 4. They need help with their treatment area, over."

"This Julian. Understand you want my team to move to Fieldstone and HH Drive. Will do."

### To change to an alternate frequency

"CERT 4, this is Dick. Change to Alternate Channel 2 in 5 minutes."

"This is 1 Kathy, understood."

"This is 2 Harry, will do."

Etc.



The following was taken directly from the Fairfax County Emergency website. For a look at more of its details click on: [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergency](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergency)

## From : Get Prepared for the 2007 Hurricane Season

### Before the Storm

- Cut dead trees and limbs that could fall on your home.
- Learn the difference between a watch and a warning. A hurricane watch indicates that hurricane conditions are possible in your area within 36 hours. A hurricane warning indicates that hurricane conditions are possible in your area within 24 hours.
- If you live in a flood-prone area, identify where to go if ordered to evacuate and the safest route to get there. If there is a flood, you may only have minutes to get to safety. Choose several places – a friend's home in another town, a motel or a shelter. Remember, public shelters and many motels don't allow pets in their facilities.
- If your home or business is in a flood-prone area, make sure you have a current flood insurance policy (not typically part of a standard insurance policy). A 30-day waiting period is generally required to purchase flood insurance, so take time now to visit your insurance agent to learn more.
- Take pictures of your property before the storm to help validate your claim and remember to take your policies with you if you need to evacuate.

### When a Hurricane is Approaching

- To help keep food cold for several hours if the power goes out, fill plastic containers with water, leaving about an inch of space inside each one (remember, water expands as it freezes). Place the containers in the refrigerator and freezer. This chilled or frozen water will help keep food cold for several hours if the power goes out.
- Fill your bathtub with water to use for toilet flushing in case water is unavailable following a storm.
- Bring in garbage cans, lawn furniture and other items that could blow away.
- Fill your car's gas tank. Gas stations will be in short supply in a power outage.

### After the Storm

- Prepare to be without power, telephone or any outside services for a week or more.
- Watch out for downed power lines, weakened structures, rodents and snakes, and avoid standing water.
- Avoid drinking tap water unless officials say it is safe to do so. Eat only foods you are absolutely sure are safe.
- Operate generators outdoors only in a well-ventilated, dry area, away from air intakes to the home. Never use a generator indoors or in attached garages. Poor ventilation can result in carbon monoxide poisoning or death.
- Avoid using candles as a light source. Deadly fires can result.

***Don't be caught off-guard. Be prepared.***



# CERT Responds in Real Disasters!!

Prince William County has been lucky to have not experienced calamitous disasters like those in some southern states in recent months. Still our core CERT mission is to be able to make a difference when disaster strikes. To do a reality check on the CERT role in real disasters, we in CERT 4 emailed about 200 CERT contacts in Alabama, Florida, Oklahoma, and Georgia asking how CERT was used in their recent disasters. We received about 30 replies mostly from emergency services supervisors of local CERT organizations. The results showed CERT involved in the following ways:

- Administrative tasks in EOCs, e.g., check-ins, taking calls
- Search and rescue
- Community evacuations
- Missing persons accounting
- Damage assessment
- Delivering supplies, food and water
- Assisting Red Cross in shelter operations
- Debris removal
- Providing recovery and claims information to public

Other activities to prepare for emergencies included conducting emergency response exercises/simulations, and participating in civic and community emergency preparedness events. CERT units were most active in cases where there was strong support from emergency services, especially fire and rescue organizations.

Here are some quotes from the replies:

"In light of the tornadoes we recently had and the hurricanes from the past three years we have also utilized CERT Teams at FEMA and State Disaster Relief Sites. The distribution of ice, food, clothing, organizing donations, all need to be handled and many times the CERT Teams can be used. We have used them to go door-to-door to hand out FEMA application for disaster assistance and are currently doing that now after the tornadoes." *Captain Tim Martin, Volusia County Fire Services, Florida*

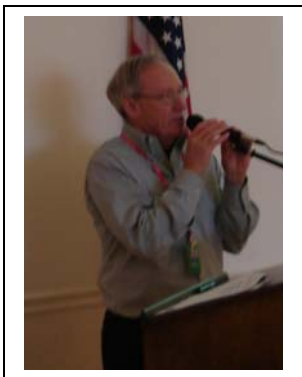
"My District has utilized our CERT members to help evacuation process, assist in our EOC, perform damage assessments, staff shelters and pet shelters, etc. We also heavily depend on our members for community events throughout the year. By being recognized in the community it helps secure funding of programs." *K. Larry Thompson, Captain, Community Education/Information, Lealman Fire District, St. Petersburg, Florida*

"For the tornadoes in Florida the past few months members have helped to direct traffic and assist other CERT teams that were in a greater impacted area. During the hurricanes of 2004 many helped with debris removal and many brought and used their own chain saws to help get trees cut and stacked for their neighbors. They really do provide a much needed service for our community. During special events (Bike Week and Speed weeks) for the Daytona Beach area, many help to deliver water for the officers in the field. They have also answered phones to assist with traffic congestion calls." *Karen Baum, Emergency Management Technician (CERT Trainer), Daytona Beach Police Department, Florida*

"The CERT team is a welcome addition to our group. . . . A recent disaster in Sumter County, just north of Albany, showed us the importance of CERT teams. A large tornado struck Americus destroying houses in its path as well as the Sumter Regional Hospital. Only recognized and certified CERT teams were called in to assist with search and rescue and render additional assistance. They played a very key role during that disaster. CERT teams are called upon to assist with lost children, lost senior citizens, water rescue and assistance to the Fire dept. during large scale fires. I could go on and on but to shorten this up I'll say that our CERT teams are very much appreciated and are a great resource we can draw from." *Chuck Mitchell, Commander of the Albany Dougherty Search & Rescue Team, Albany, Georgia*

For a full report on our findings, contact me at 703-743-5173 or [repowell55@comcast.net](mailto:repowell55@comcast.net).

Dick Powell, Leader, CERT 4



## NOTES FROM THE CHAIR

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (EC) VACANCY

*Would you like to serve PWC CERT by being a member of the Executive Committee?*



The operating arm of PWC CERT is the Executive Committee (EC). There are five (5) key functions that the EC performs: Supports county plans and operations, maintains an effective organization with a stated level of readiness, supports CERT training, assist communities and neighborhoods in education preparedness and obtain material to support these functions. **All EC members help each other in performing their leadership duties.** One position remains open, the **Vice Chair for Logistics and Finance**. The call is going out for a volunteer to step forward and fill this position on the EC. The new Vice Chair will work with the following members: Hugh Stevenson, Chair; Stan Ford, Sr. Vice Chair for Operations and Planning; Marsha Davis, Vice Chair for Information and Education and Sandra Rebeor, Vice Chair for Training and Readiness. During the Summer months, most EC monthly meetings are by email. If you are interested in joining the team, please notify any current EC member.

Hugh Stevenson thanks River Ridge CERT members for their participation in the River Ridge Exercise. Those members are pictured at the right. He also said, "We could not have provided a more realistic exercise without the Triage Marking Kits that were given to us by OWL".



River Ridge CERT members from the left. Don Ritenour, Bernice Backstrom, Al Ullman, Frank White, and Rita Bourgois.

**Feedback:** We would like to receive your feedback on this newsletter, CERT programs, and activities reported here or through other means. It is important to the Executive Committee that we stay in touch with your needs and ideas. Feel free to contact any EC member. Our contact information can be found on page 2.